

BENHS FIELD MEETINGS

Welshbury Hill, near Cinderford, Gloucestershire, 25 June 1994

Leader: **Paul Waring**. This was a joint evening and night-time meeting between the BENHS, the Gloucestershire Invertebrate Group and Butterfly Conservation. It was attended by 22 people, including 14 members of the BENHS. Welshbury Hill (Fig. 1) is the site of an iron-age hill fort, now largely overgrown with small-leaved lime *Tilia cordata* Miller. Presumably there was formerly good visibility from the fort but it seems that some of the stools of lime coppice extend out on both sides of the earth ramparts and therefore pre-date them. Small-leaved lime is the only larval foodplant of the rare scarce hook-tip *Sabra harpagula* (Esp.) in Britain, and the moth is only known from the Wye Valley woodlands on the borders of Gloucestershire with Monmouthshire and formerly (1837–1938) from Leigh Woods in the Avon Gorge near Bristol (Emmet & Heath, 1991). One of the aims of this meeting was to see if this moth could be found in other old lime woods outlying the Wye Valley/Forest of Dean area. Another was to begin to discover the existing moth interest of the site and consider how it might be affected by different management options, such as clearing trees from the areas of archaeological interest, mass thinnings or fellings of the apparently rather even-aged lime stands, or felling of smaller coups on rotation.

No scarce hook-tip was seen during the field meeting at Welshbury Hill, despite the operation of 17 mercury vapour lights and one actinic trap in or near stands of lime, even though the moth was recorded by a group including the leader and various members the previous night at its known haunts near Tintern. Return visits to Welshbury Hill were made by Bernard Skinner on 27.vi.1994, and by Paul Waring, Ray Barnett and Andy Pym with three light traps on 1.vii.1994, but again no scarce hook-tip was seen. On each of these visits many other species of moths were noted and on the last night the weather was particularly favourable for light-trapping. The most important find was the pyralid moth *Salebriopsis albicilla* (H.-S.), the larva of which feeds on small-leaved lime. This moth was first discovered in Britain in 1964



Fig. 1. Welshbury Hill approaching from Flaxley, Gloucestershire. Photo: P. Waring.



Fig. 2. One of the stands of small-leaved lime *Tilia cordata* light-trapped near the top of Welshbury Hill. Photo: P. Waring.

and was known, until this meeting, only from the Wye Valley woodlands, and from Leigh Woods in 1968 and 1995 (Skinner, 1996; Waring, 1996a,b). A number of males and a female were seen on the BENHS meeting and several more males and females in the subsequent visits, in several traps both in thinned and unthinned stands of tall lime trees. Some eggs were obtained and these have since been reared and the immature stages described and illustrated (Skinner, 1996). The male in the



Fig. 3. Dominic Rey, Mr and Mrs Tony Dobson, and Bernard Skinner examining one of Tony's "wine-ropes" at Welshbury Hill. Photo: P. Waring.



Fig. 4. Male *Salebriopsis albicilla* (Pyrilidae) at rest in the morning by one of the light traps at Welshbury Hill where a colony was discovered on 25.vi.1994. Photo: P. Waring.

accompanying photograph (Fig. 4) is shown at rest where found by the light trap. He was moving his antennae alternately, lifting one then the other, showing off the striking white basal portions in the process.

Other note-worthy species included Blomer's rivulet *Discoloxia blomeri* (Curt.), clay triple-lines *Cyclophora linearia* (Hüb.), cloaked carpet *Euphyia biangulata* (Haw.), clouded magpie *Abraxas sylvata* (Scop.), dingy shell *Euchoeca nebulata* (Scop.), great oak beauty *Boarmia roboraria* (D. & S.), poplar and satin lutestrings *Tethea or* (D. & S.) and *Tetheella fluctuosa* (Hüb.), scarlet tiger moth *Callinorpha dominula* (L.), sharp-angled carpet *Euphyia unangulata* (Haw.) and square-spot *Paradarisa consonaria* (Hüb.), as well as plenty of lime hawk-moths *Mimas tiliae* (L.). In addition, 79 species of macromoths were recorded in the adjacent Flaxley Woods, using another four traps, during the meeting, including the cloaked carpet. The night's total for the two woods together was 94 species of macros; 19 species of micromoths were recorded in Flaxley Woods but *S. albicilla* was not seen (Roger Gaunt, pers. comm.).

Other invertebrates recorded during the meeting included a ground beetle *Carabus problematicus* Herbst running across the main track through the woodland after dark (det. Gavin Boyd) and several cockchafers *Melolontha melolontha* (L.) which came to the light traps.

During the late afternoon we watched a pair of common buzzards *Buteo buteo* circling and calling in the sky over the wood and just before dusk one flew off from a perch among the trees. A fledgling long-eared owl *Asio otus* spent a great deal of time calling from the lime trees up by the fort as we walked around the traps at 01.00 hrs, indicating that the birds had bred here. A breeze rustled the leaves in the tree tops and there was only broken cloud during the night. The light traps in sheltered locations had the largest catches, particularly of geometrid moths. A badger *Meles meles* was seen during the meeting and a large sett and several badgers were seen on the second of the follow-up visits.

A number of us spent all night in the woods, getting a few hours sleep in our cars among the trees and sharing breakfast on a glorious sunny morning with the elder *Sambucus nigra* L. in bloom and with commanding views over the Severn Valley. This really is a most atmospheric and grand site to work.

A copy of this report and a full species list have been sent to the Forestry Commission and the records have been copied for the Invertebrate Site Register (JNCC, Peterborough) and the Gloucestershire Invertebrate Group. Brock (1994) reported on the meeting for the Gloucestershire Branch of Butterfly Conservation. I would like to thank the Forestry Commission for permission to hold this field meeting and Roger Gaunt, Gloucestershire county moth recorder, for looking after the group in Flaxley Wood. I thank everyone who attended and helped to ensure such an enjoyable meeting, such good coverage of the woods by light traps and the collection of so much useful data. Shortly after the meeting I was asked to comment on various management proposals and the results from the meeting were a great help in this, particularly so since there are few other invertebrate records for these sites.

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Howlands Marsh Nature Reserve (Essex Wildlife Trust), 14 September 1995

Leaders: **Joe Firmin** and **Reg Arthur**. This was a joint meeting between BENHS, the Invertebrate Group of Colchester Natural History Society and Essex Lepidoptera Panel, attended by nine with a good spread of entomological expertise and three Essex county recorders in the group.

Howlands Marsh is a 186-acre SSSI managed by Essex Wildlife Trust and is one of the few coastal grazing marshes still surviving in Essex. It consists mainly of hummocky grassland split up by dykes and fleets. There is a narrow fringe of saltmarsh outside the sea wall, widening into a large block where two creeks meet at St Osyth.

It was a sunny day and five butterfly species were recorded. There were five sightings of the clouded yellow, *Colias croceus* (Geoff.), during the day.

As well as the usual Essex coastal specialities such as Roesel's bush cricket, *Metrioptera roeseli* (Hagenb.), and the ruddy darter dragonfly, *Sympetrum sanguineum* (Müll.), the following scarcer species were noted. Orthoptera: great green bush cricket, *Tettigonia viridissima* L. Diptera: *Myopites eximia* Séguy, galls were found on *Inula crithmoides* (golden samphire) growing between concrete blocks on the sea wall. Hymenoptera: *Aulacidea follioti*, galls found on *Sonchus asper* by a borrowdyke; this is a new site for this scarce cynipid wasp known in Britain only from the Essex coast where it was first discovered in 1993. Coleoptera: Adonis' ladybird *Adonia variegata* (Goeze) swept from sea-wall vegetation; this is a mainly coastal species, scarce in north Essex. *Cassida vittata* de Vill., a local tortoise beetle;

two individuals were found under driftwood. *Sibinia primitus* (Herbst), a local weevil associated with *Sagina* and *Spergularia* although on this occasion taken on water parsnip by BENHS member Nigel Cuming.

Six stayed on to run three m.v. lamps in the reserve. The night yielded a species tally of 39 macro species and four species of microlepidoptera. Among the more interesting macro moths recorded were autumnal rustic (*Paradiarsia glareosa* Esp.); crescent (*Celaena leucostigma* Hübn.); hedge rustic (*Tholera cespitis* D. & S.); small wainscot (*Photedes pygmina* Haw.) and bulrush wainscot (*Nonagria typhae* Thunb.).

During the day a number of the attractive little saltmarsh plume moth (*Agdistis bennettii* Curt.) were seen on sea lavender, which is the larval foodplant.

Searches of the reserve reedbeds revealed the presence of larvae of the reed dagger (*Simyra albovenosa* Goeze). This is a local species in Essex and Suffolk.

Beachy Head, East Sussex, 15 June 1996

Leader: **Mark Parsons**. Although billed as a field meeting to Beachy Head, this meeting was centred on the downs at the foot of Beachy Head nearer Eastbourne, incorporating Holywell, Whitbread Hollow and Cow Gap. Only two members attended the afternoon meeting. This was perhaps not unexpected given the fact that, despite sunny conditions, a cool strong south-easterly wind was blowing. This meant that there was very little flying. However, six species of butterfly were noted including a few Adonis blue *Lysandra bellargus* (Rott.) and several painted lady *Cynthia cardui* (L.) (some evidence of the recent strong migration of this species). The most significant find of the afternoon, and the day, was the discovery of half-a-dozen larvae of the plume moth *Cnaemidophorus rhodactyla* (D. & S.), confirming that the species is at least temporarily resident in the Eastbourne area. The larvae were very localized and seemed to be present in just a small area, although given the time it was not possible to search all potentially suitable sites.

Although the cool winds did not abate, ten members and friends attended the evening session. However, it rapidly became obvious that it was not to be a particularly fruitful evening as the temperature had dropped to around 10°C shortly after dusk and, if anything, the winds had become more blustery. Some were able to run traps in comparatively sheltered spots, other trapping sites were somewhat more exposed. Fourteen m.v. light traps were operated, but despite this effort the total list for the macrolepidoptera struggled to around the 40 species mark. Amongst these was evidence again of a recent migration, with two bordered straw *Heliothis peltigera* (D. & S.) being noted. The resident species that did appear included the privet hawk *Sphinx ligustri* L., a few small elephant hawk *Deilephila porcellus* (L.), and several cream-spot tiger *Arctia villica* (L.). Perhaps not surprisingly, very few microlepidoptera were seen. It was a great disappointment that the weather was against us as it was generally agreed that the area, with its variety of chalk downland habitats, should prove a particularly interesting place for study.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank David Pearce (the Downland Ranger) for granting access permission to the site.

Le Havre, France
Joint Meeting with Evreux Entomological Society,
31 May–2 June 1996

Leaders: **B. Goater** and **D. J. L. Agassiz**. This was the third joint meeting between the two societies. The first was in Rouen in 1993, the second at Dinton Pastures in 1994. Apart from a brief excursion to Pamber Forest in the rain during the second meeting, this was the first meeting planned primarily for field work.

Unfortunately only four members represented the BENHS, but the number of our hosts varied between 12 and 15 at various times. A rendezvous at Le Havre enabled British participants to travel as foot passengers, although two from further east went by car through the Channel Tunnel.

After meeting up with our hosts we travelled to the village of Bouquelon. A brief look in the vicinity, which was not designated as a collecting locality, revealed species of note—in the churchyard the microlepidopteron *Argyresthia trifasciata* Stdgr was abundant. Only one specimen has been recorded in England despite its being a horticultural pest on *Thuja* and related trees. In the same place was the handsome blue-and-red clerid beetle *Trichodes alvearius* (F).

We were then taken to a vantage point overlooking Le Marais Vernier, a large area of wetland. The conservation strategy was explained by the park warden with his interpreter. The resources made available by the local authority for this were impressive, and a range of measures such as grazing by highland cattle were practised. Then we went down into the marsh to collect and record specimens. Among the more remarkable for English entomologists were the soldier beetle *Cantharis fusca* L., the soldier fly *Beris clavipes* (L.) and a cocoon of the alder kitten *Furcula bicuspis* (Borkh.), uncommon British species. There was also a surprisingly large example of the groundhopper *Tetrix ceperoi* (Bol.), and the violet leaf beetle *Agelastica ahii* (L.) was so common it is difficult to understand why it has died out in Britain. Nor could we fail to notice the storks, nesting at what must be their most northerly European site; they had availed themselves of a platform provided on a tall strong pole.

After being extravagantly wined and dined by our hosts in Bouquelon we returned for night work at lights in the Marais Vernier. It is always interesting to compare the methods of different groups of entomologists; one local custom was to use a Wood's glass black m.v. lamp high above a normal m.v. lamp. A number of moths were recorded despite a cool evening, including *Cyclophora pendularia* (Clerck), but nothing non-British. We were kindly accommodated by local members to whose homes we repaired at great speed in the early hours.

On the Saturday morning we assembled at the Museum in Rouen, where many specimens collected by local members were set before us, some of which we attempted to name. This was followed by a further meal at a Rouen restaurant appropriately named Flunch! In the afternoon we went to a piece of calcareous downland at Saint Adrien, on the right bank of the Seine south of Rouen. The weather was warm and bright, apart from a very light shower, and we were impressed with the richness of flora and fauna. Whilst the field cricket sang to us wood white butterflies were in quantity and other Lepidoptera scarce in Britain were noted: a swallowtail butterfly, a black-veined moth, a mine of the tortricid *Lobesia occidentis* (Falk.) and cases of *Coleophora ochrea* (Haw.) and *C. vibicella* (Hübner).

Non-British species included *Coleophora chamaedryella* (H.-S.), *Xerocnephasia rigana* (Sodof.) and the green-underside blue butterfly *Glaucopsyche alexis* (Poda.). There were also found the groundhopper *Tetrix tenuicornis* (Sahlb.), the cockroach *Ectobius sylvestris* (Poda), several red-and-black ground bugs *Lygaeus equestris* (L.) and the shieldbug *Graphosoma italicum*, boldly striped in black and red, a common Mediterranean species which does not reach Britain.

After a wonderful afternoon we returned to our respective hosts, again to consume splendid wine and food. The next morning those who had not had to dash for a ferry returned to the Rouen Museum for more work on collections. It was Mother's Day in France which made finding a restaurant for lunch quite a task, after which our hosts were finally left in peace. For the few members who braved the journey and the language this was a memorable meeting, like its predecessors, and our warmest thanks go to our hosts of the Evreux Entomologists Society for their excellent hospitality.

SELECTED SPECIES LISTS

Bouquelon, Eure, 31 May 1996

Psyche casta (Pallas) a few cases
Glyphipterix simplicella (Steph.) a few
G. fuscoviridella (Haw.)
Argyresthia trifasciata Stdgr many adults
 and mines on *Cupressus*
Epermenia chaerophyllella (Goeze) a few
 larvae on *Heracleum*

Marais Vernier, Eure, 31 May 1996,
 afternoon and night

Luffia ferchaultella (Steph.)/?*lapidella*
 (Goeze) many cases
Psyche casta (Pallas) several cases
Bucculatrix cidarella Zell.
Prochoreutis myllerana (F.) a few pupae on
Scutellaria galericulata
Glyphipterix thrasionella (Scop.) a few
Yponomeuta cagnagella (Hübner) many larval
 webs on *Euonymus*
Plutella xylostella (L.) a few
Coleophora serratella (L.) a few cases on
Ahus glutinosa
C. follicularis (Vallot) a few cases on
Pulicaria dysenterica
C. taeniipennella H.-S. case on *Juncus*
C. caespitiella Zell.
Agonopterix ciliella (Staint.) a few larvae on
Angelica
A. ocellana (F.) larva on *Salix cinerea*
Mompha epilobiella (D. & S.) a few larvae on
Epilobium hirsutum
Cochylis nana (Haw.)
Clepsis spectrana (Treits) a few
Olethreutes lacumana (D. & S.) several

Bactra lancealana (Hübner) very many
Epinotia immundana (F. v. R.) a few
Evergestis pallidata (Hufn.) a few
Pyrausta aurata (Scop.) a few
Cynthia cardui (L.) a few
Drepana falcataria (L.) a few
Cyclophora pendularia (Clerck)
Timandra comai Schmidt = *griseata* auctt. a
 few
Orthonama vittata (Borkh.) many
Epirrhoe alternata (Müll.) a few
Chloroclysta truncata (Hufn.) a few
Operophtera brumata (Linn.) a few larvae on
Salix cinerea
Eupithecia exigua (Hübner)
E. centaureata (D. & S.)
Lomaspilis marginata (L.) a few
Opisthograptis luteolata (L.)
Serraca punctinalis (Scop.)
Aethalura punctulata (D. & S.) several
Cabera exanthemata (Scop.)
Smerinthus ocellata (L.) a few
Deilephila elpenor (L.) a few
Phalera bucephala (L.)
Furcula bicuspis (Borkh.) an old cocoon on
Ahus glutinosa
Notodonta dromedarius (L.)
Peridea anceps (Goeze)
Calliteara pudibunda (L.) a few
Spilosoma lubricipeda (L.) a few
Diaphora mendica (Clerck)
Ochropleura plecta (L.) several
Diaris rubi (View.) several
Xestia c-nigrum (L.)
Lacanobia oleracea (L.) a few
Hadena rivularis (F.)
Mythimna pallens (L.)
Acronicta megacephala (D. & S.)

- Simyra albovenosa* (Goeze)
Apamea crenata (Hufn.) a few
Oligia fasciuncula (Haw.)
Plusia festucae (L.) a few
Autographa gamma (L.) a few
- St Adrien, Seine-Maritime, 1 June 1996
Eriocrania subpurpurella (Haw.) many vacated mines on *Quercus*
Ectoedemia atrifrontella (Staint.) mine in bark of *Quercus*
Stigmella aurella (F.) a few vacated mines on *Rubus*
S. hybnerella (Hüb. n.) a few mines, one tenanted, on *Crataegus*
Tischeria ekebladella (Bjerk.) many
T. marginea (Haw.) a few mines on *Rubus fruticosus*
Zygaena trifolii (Esp.) larva on *Lotus corniculatus*
Taleporia tubulosa (Retz.) case
Psyche casta (Pall.) many cases
Leucoptera laburnella (Staint.) a few tenanted mines on *Laburnum*
L. walesella (Staint.) a few tenanted mines on *Genista tinctoria*
Caloptilia syringella (F.)
Acrocerops brongniardella (F.) a few mines, some tenanted, on *Quercus*
Phyllonorycter quercifoliella (Zell.) a few
P. emberizaepenella (Bouché)
Glyptopterix simplicifolia (Steph.) a few
Argyresthia spinosella (Staint.)
Yponomeuta cagnagella (Hüb. n.) many larval webs on *Euonymus*
Coleophora lutipennella (Zell.)
C. flavipennella (Dup.) many cases on *Quercus*
C. gryphipennella (Hüb. n.) many larval workings on *Rosa*
C. serratella (L.) many cases on *Corylus* and *Betula*
C. adjunctella H.-S. case on *Prunus spinosa*
C. chamaedryella (H.-S.) many cases on *Teucrium chamaedrys*, 1 on *T. scorodonia*
C. hemerobiella (Scop.) case on *Crataegus*
C. ochrea (Haw.) many cases on *Helianthemum*
C. vibicella (Hüb. n.) many cases on *Genista tinctoria*
C. discordella Zell. case on *Lotus corniculatus*
C. follicularis (Vallot) a few cases on *Eupatorium cannabinum*
C. paripennella Zell. a few cases on *Centaurea nigra*
Elachista argentella (Clerck)
- E. gangabella* Zell.
Alabonia geoffrella (L.) many
Agonopterix heracleana (L.) larva on *Anthriscus sylvestris*
A. atomella (D. & S.) larva on *Genista tinctoria*
A. liturosa (Haw.) a few larvae on *Hypericum* sp.
Syncopacma taeniolella (Zell.) a few larvae on *Lotus corniculatus*
Telephila schmidtii (Heyd.) larva on *Origanum*
Aethes tesserana (D. & S.)
Xerocephasia rigana (Sodof.)
Acleris schalleriana (L.) many larvae on *Viburnum lantana*
Olethreutes lacunana (D. & S.) a few
Lobesia occidentis Falk. vacated mine in *Euphorbia*
Epiblema costipunctana (Haw.)
Eucosma cana (Haw.)
Pammene sp.
Dichrorampha plumbana (Scop.) a few
Pyrausta aurata (Scop.) a few
Anania fumebris (Ström)
Capperia britanniodactyla (Gregs.) larva and much feeding on *Teucrium scorodonia*
Pterophorus baliiodactyla Zell. larval feeding on *Origanum*
Adaina microdactyla (Hüb. n.)
Erynnis tages (L.) a few
Papilio machaon L.
Leptidea sinapis (L.) many
Gonepteryx rhamni (L.) many
Callophrys rubi (L.)
Polyommatus icarus (Rott.) a few
Lysandra bellargus (Rott.) many
Glaucopsyche alexis (Poda)
Cynthia cardui (L.) a few
Lasiommata megera (L.) a few
Cyclophora punctaria (L.)
Scopula floslactata (Haw.)
Scotopteryx micronata (Scop.) a few
Colostygia pectinataria (Knoch)
Asthenes albulata (Hufn.)
Minoa murinata (Scop.)
Pseudopanthera macularia (L.) many
Erannis defoliaria (Clerck) larva on *Betula*
Campaea margaritata (L.)
Siona lineata (Scop.) a few
Phlogophora meticulosa (L.)
Autographa gamma (L.) a few
Callistege mi (Clerck) a few
Euclidia glyphica (L.) a few
Phytometra viridaria (Clerck) a few

Heathlands and bogs near Sway, New Forest, Hampshire, 27 July 1996

Leader: **Paul Waring**. The leader was joined by 32 people for the afternoon session and a further nine for the evening stint. This was a joint meeting and included some members of the Hampshire branch of Butterfly Conservation who were not also BENHS members. Hinchelsea Moor (SU275005) to the northeast of Set Thorns Inclosure and the boggy heathland (SZ258995) by the stream known as Avon Water, between Set Thorns and the Broadley Inclosure, were the two sites explored during the warm, dry, calm but somewhat overcast afternoon. The afternoon party walked down from the car park at Set Thorns (SZ272997) and through the gap in the embankment of the disused railway line on which my great-grandfather worked during its heyday. A July belle *Scotopteryx luridata* flushed from the heath as we set off from the car park.

A particular objective of this meeting was to see if we could find the speckled footman moth *Coscinia cribraria* (L.). This heathland moth is now endangered in Britain. There are old records of the adults being seen in numbers by day, when they sometimes fly up from low vegetation, and it also comes to light traps. A single adult was light-trapped in one of its old heathland haunts near Wareham in 1996, the first record since 1993 from Dorset, where it appears to be at an all-time low in numbers. Between 1993 and 1996 a number of promising sites and former localities in Dorset have been searched for larvae and adults, and light-traps have been operated by Norman Hutchinson, Peter Davey and others, without finding any other individuals.

The speckled footman used to be recorded from the New Forest heaths around Ringwood and Burley, but it has not been reported from the Forest since two were taken in 1959 and one in 1960. It is not clear how much effort has been made to find the moth in the extensive heaths and bogs near Sway; probably insufficient was the considered opinion of several local lepidopterists I contacted. This field meeting provided the opportunity to run light traps, search and net at dusk on six separate sites simultaneously. The date was chosen to coincide with the peak of the flight season, based on records from the 1970s and early 1980s.

Starting on Hinchelsea Moor, we found a stonechat *Saxicola torquata* and a few silver-studded blues *Plebejus argus* (L.) on arrival. Habitats on this boggy moor range from stands of common reed *Phragmites australis* (Cav.), greater reed-mace *Typha latifolia* L. and sedges *Carex* spp. in the wettest parts, through zones of cotton grass *Eriophorum vaginatum* L. and rushes *Juncus* spp. with muddy patches covered in sundew *Drosera rotundifolia* L., rising into hummocks and drier slopes covered with ling heather *Calluna vulgaris* L., bell heather *Erica cinerea* L. and cross-leaved heath *E. tetralix* L. Some of the latter was close-cropped, much was ankle-deep and there was a large stand of more mature, calf-deep heathers, so there was certainly a wide range of habitats on offer for the speckled footman and other invertebrates.

A snipe *Gallinago gallinago* flew up and away almost as soon as we reached the boggy ground. We soon encountered numbers of the small red damselfly *Ceriatagrion tenellum* (de Vill.) and the bog bush cricket *Metrioptera brachyptera* (L.). A common ground hopper *Tetrix undulata* (Sow.) was swept and several long-winged conchheads *Gonocephalus discolor* (Thunb.) were seen. A large nymph of the striking red form of the large marsh grasshopper *Stethophyma grossum* (L.) was photographed. Several keeled skimmer dragonflies *Orthetrum coerulescens* (F.) were in evidence. Some were basking but there was only hazy sun and few were flying.



Fig. 1. One of the groups inspecting Hinchelsea Moor. Photo: P. Waring

A large immature female spider of a *Dolomedes* sp. was boxed and passed around for inspection, and several other species of spider were identified by Ken Halstead. These included *Agelena labyrinthica* (Clerck), *Pisaura mirabilis* (Clerck) guarding its nursery web (there was quite an abundance of these), *Linyphia triangularis* (Clerck) and *Evarcha arcuata* (Clerck). These are relatively common species but they attracted a lot of interest from members.

Adult moths seen included a rosy wave *Scopula emutaria* in perfect condition, an immaculate purple-bordered gold *Idaea muricata*, the small purple-barred *Phytometra viridaria* (F.) and several fresh green grass emerald *Pseudoterpna pruinata*. The beautiful yellow underwing *Anarta myrtilli* was seen as adults and swept as larvae, and other larvae recorded were the broom *Ceramica pisi* (L.) and the fox moth *Macrothylacia rubi*. A male oak eggar *Lasiocampa quercus* coursed swiftly over the site. Other heathland moths seen included several of the bordered grey *Selidosema brunnearia* (Vill.), narrow-winged pug *Eupithecia nanata* and more July belle, but there was no sign of the speckled footman.

As we returned from the bog to Set Thorns Inclosure, a nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus* was flushed from amongst the heathers and gorse *Ulex europaeus* L. on an upper slope. Later in the meeting on nearby heathland Ron Louch found a nightjar's nest with one hatched chick still with egg tooth and another egg not yet hatched.

The party was then divided into two. The first group went off to inspect Cranes Moor (particularly SU1803 & SU1804), a large area of heathland between Burley and Crow, and to select light trap sites there for the evening. The other group strolled through Set Thorns Inclosure to Avon Water and then visited the northern part of this bog system by Wootton Inclosure, easily reached from the



Fig. 2. A gathering round Barry Fox's light and sheet. Photo: P Waring

car park at Wootton Bridge. Some of the species seen on Hinchelsea Moor were encountered again on these sites, and these are included in the accompanying table of results.

The Hare & Hounds pub and Forest Heath Hotel in Sway provided evening meals and other refreshments and another small group ate camp food under the trees at Set Thorns.

When we regrouped at 20.00 hours light traps were set up at selected spots at both ends of Hinchelsea Moor (H1-5) (several traps between SU269004 & SU277006), at Avon Water by Set Thorns Inclosure (one Robinson trap at SZ265988), at Avon Water by Wootton Inclosure (one actinic) and inside the eastern edge of this Inclosure (SZ246995) (m.v.), further up the same bog, opposite Wilverley Inclosure (SU243001), at the south end of Goatspen Plain both on the bog on the east side of the road to Burley and on the bank of mature heather on the west side (SU231011), and on Cranes Moor (several lights in SU1803 & SU1804). Over twenty light traps were in use in all.

Unfortunately, the cloud cover we endured during the afternoon had broken up by dusk and the night turned cold and misty. Driving from one group of trappers to another after dark was quite challenging as banks of mist rolled across the heathland and we strained to follow the roads and tracks. We expected to see the Hound of the Baskervilles leap into the headlight beams at any minute! Perhaps similar difficulties of navigation explain why a fresh male light crimson underwing *Catocala promissa* and a festoon *Apoda limacodes* ended up at m.v. traps on the open heathland at Goatspen Plain, instead of remaining in their breeding grounds in oak woodland. In general the light-trap catches were small as a result of the unfavourable weather, but

List of the more interesting moths recorded on the BENHS meeting in the New Forest on 27 July 1996.

	C1	C2	H1	H2	H3	H4	H5	A	G	W	Wi
<i>Apoda limacodes</i> (Hufn.)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	G	—	—
<i>Olethreutes rivulana</i> (Scop.)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	G	—	—
<i>Rhyacionia pinicolana</i> (Doubl.)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	G	—	—
<i>Lasiocampa quercus</i> (L.)	C1	C2	H1	—	H3	H4	—	—	G	—	—
<i>Macrothylacia rubi</i> (L.)	—	C2	H1	—	H3	—	—	—	—	—	—
<i>Ochropacha duplaris</i> (L.)	C1	—	—	—	—	—	—	A	—	—	Wi
<i>Pseudoterpna pruinata</i> (Hufn.)	C1	C2	H1	H2	H3	H4	—	A	G	W	Wi
<i>Cyclophora albipunctata</i> (Hufn.)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	W	—
<i>Cyclophora punctaria</i> (L.)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	W	—
<i>Scopula emutaria</i> (Hübner)	—	—	H1	—	—	—	—	A	—	—	Wi
<i>Idaea muricata</i> (Hufn.)	C1	—	—	—	H3	—	—	—	—	—	—
<i>Idaea sylvestraria</i> (Hübner)	—	C2	H1	—	—	—	—	A	—	—	—
<i>Idaea subsericeata</i> (Haw.)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	W	Wi
<i>Idaea straminata</i> (Bork.)	C1	—	H1	—	H3	—	—	—	G	W	Wi
<i>Rhodometra sacraria</i> (L.)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	G	—	—
<i>Orthonama obstipata</i> (F.)	—	—	H1	—	—	—	—	A	—	—	—
<i>Scoptopteryx luridata</i> (Hufn.)	—	C2	—	H2	—	—	H5	—	G	—	—
<i>Eulithis prunata</i> (L.)	—	—	—	—	H3	—	—	—	—	—	—
<i>Eulithis testata</i> (L.)	—	—	H1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
<i>Perizoma albulata</i> (D & S)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	A	—	—	—
<i>Eupithecia goossensata</i> Mab.	C1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Wi
<i>Eupithecia nanata angusta</i> Prout	C1	C2	H1	H2	—	—	—	—	—	—	Wi
<i>Pachygnemina hippocastanaria</i> (Hübner)	C1	C2	H1	—	H3	H4	—	—	G	W	Wi
<i>Epione repandaria</i> (Hufn.)	—	—	H1	—	—	—	—	—	—	W	—
<i>Selidosema brunnearia</i> (Vill.)	—	—	—	—	H3	—	H5	—	G	W	—
<i>Gnophos obscurata</i> (D & S)	—	C2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
<i>Hyloicus pinastri</i> (L.)	—	—	—	—	—	H4	—	—	G	W	Wi
<i>Dicallomera fascelina</i> (L.)	C1	C2	—	—	—	—	—	—	G	—	—
<i>Euproctis chrysorrhoea</i> (L.)	—	—	H1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
<i>Lymantria monacha</i> (L.)	—	—	—	—	H3	—	—	A	—	W	Wi
<i>Thumatha senex</i> (Hübner)	—	—	H1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Wi
<i>Mitrochrista miniata</i> (Forst.)	—	—	H1	—	H3	H4	—	A	—	W	Wi

Continued

a good range of species was recorded. It was pleasing to see the rosy wave along Avon Water and in the bog by Wilverley Inclosure, as well as on Hinchelsea Moor, and the purple-bordered gold also at Cranes Moor. The dotted-border wave *Idaea sylvestraria* turned up at all three of these sites. The rosy marbled *Elaphria venustula* and oak nycteoline *Nycteola revayana* were noted by George Higgs on Long Slade Heath adjacent to Hinchelsea Moor. Five old lady moths *Mormo maura* were attracted to wine-ropes by stunted trees along Avon Water; two more were seen at Wootton Inclosure and one on Goatspen Plain. An annulet *Gnophos obscurata* was noted on Cranes Moor.

Several migrant species were recorded, including the vestal *Rhodometra sacraria* (1), the gem *Orthonama obstipata* (3), the small mottled willow *Spodoptera exigua* (1), the rush veneer *Nomophila noctuella* (which was numerous throughout the summer)

List of the more interesting moths recorded on the BENHS meeting in the New Forest on 27 July 1996 (continued).

<i>Cybosia mesomella</i> (L.)	—	—	H1	—	—	H4	—	A	G	W	Wi
<i>Eilema complana</i> (L.)	C1	C2	H1	—	H3	H4	—	—	G	W	—
<i>Eilema deplana</i> (Esp.)	—	C2	—	—	H3	—	—	—	G	—	—
<i>Agrotis clavis</i> (Hufn.)	—	—	H1	—	—	—	—	—	G	—	—
<i>Lycophotia porphyrea</i> (D & S)	C1	C2	H1	—	H3	H4	—	—	G	W	Wi
<i>Naenia typica</i> (L.)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	G	W	—
<i>Anarta myrtilli</i> (L.)	C1	C2	—	—	H3	H4	—	—	G	W	Wi
<i>Polia nebulosa</i> (Hufn.)	—	C2	—	—	H3	—	—	—	—	—	—
<i>Mythimna pudorina</i> (D & S)	C1	C2	H1	—	H3	—	—	—	G	W	Wi
<i>Mythimna straminea</i> (Treits.)	C1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	W	Wi
<i>Brachyolomia viminalis</i> (F.)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	G	—	—
<i>Parastichtis suspecta</i> (Hübner.)	—	—	—	—	H3	—	—	—	G	—	—
<i>Acronicta aceris</i> (L.)	—	C2	—	—	H3	—	—	—	—	—	—
<i>Acronicta leporina</i> (L.)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	G	—	—
<i>Crantophora ligustri</i> (D & S)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	W	Wi
<i>Mormo maura</i> (L.)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	A	G	W	—
<i>Dypterygia scabriuscula</i> (L.)	—	—	H1	—	—	—	—	—	G	—	—
<i>Amphipoea oculata</i> (L.)	—	—	H1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
<i>Spodoptera exigua</i> (Hübner.)	—	C2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
<i>Elaphria venustula</i> (Hübner.)	—	—	—	—	—	H4	—	—	—	—	—
<i>Lithacodia pygarga</i> (Hufn.)	—	—	—	—	—	H3	—	—	—	W	Wi
<i>Nycteola revayana</i> (Scop.)	—	—	—	—	—	H4	—	—	—	—	—
<i>Catocala promissa</i> (D & S)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	G	—	—

Site codes for Table of Results: C1 = SU1803, Cranes Moor, including J. Chainey, J. Spence, A. Dobson, A. Butcher, N. Hutchinson and others; C2 = SU1804, Cranes Moor, recorders as above; H1 = SU269004, Hinchelsea Moor, west end, P. & D. Sharpe and various others; H2 = SU2700, Hinchelsea Moor, large day-time group; H3 = SU277006, Hinchelsea Moor, east end, B. and J. Fox and several others; H4 = SU20, Long Slade Heath, G. Higgs and party; H5 = SZ2799, Hinchelsea Moor, J. Chainey *et al.* by day; A = SZ265988, Avon Water, D. Green and others; G = SU2301, Goatspen Plain, R. Louch, J. Gosling, D. Gibbs, A. Jenkins and party; W = SZ246995, Wootton Inclosure and edge, S. Curson and party; Wi = SU243001, boggy heath by Wilverley Inclosure, A. Pickles.

and a brown-tail *Euproctis chrysorrhoea* which was presumably a migrant from the coast, though larvae have also been found inland in Hampshire, in the Alice Holt area (T. G. Winter, pers. comm.). Larval webs are frequent on Lymington marshes only 10 km to the south-east of our trap sites on this meeting (A. Pickles, pers. comm.).

The speckled footman could still be present somewhere on these sites in spite of the negative results of the field meeting. Further surveys should be conducted on warmer nights, when the moth has sometimes been recorded in numbers, hopping low over the ground to light traps between 23.00 hours and midnight (S. Pittis, pers. comm.). The most promising areas to return to are probably the mature stands of heathers on warm dry hummocks and slopes at Cranes Moor and in the eastern part of Hinchelsea Moor.

As a separate issue, during this meeting we noted the scarcity of really tall, mature heathers in this part of the Forest. Nowhere did we find heathers which were knee-deep or taller. This stage of the heather growth cycle must be at a premium in the Forest because of the currently high grazing pressure from domestic stock and deer, and management practices to reduce the risk of fires.

I would like to thank everyone for supporting this field meeting and enabling the simultaneous survey of the above sites in the Forest. I would particularly like to thank John Chainey and Norman Hutchinson for looking after the group which covered Cranes Moor while the rest of us covered the sites nearer to Sway. I thank my wife, Rachel Thomas, and Susan Clarke for help with logistics at Set Thorns. I thank English Nature and the Forestry Commission for permission to hold this meeting, for providing keys to locked gates, and I would like to thank Martin Noble from the FC for joining us for the afternoon session. Copies of this report are being supplied to EN, FC and Barry Goater, the Hampshire Moth Recorder.

Titchwell, RSPB Reserve, Norfolk, 29 June 1996

Leader: **Matthew Shardlow**. Driving cold rain was the despiriting weather in the early afternoon. Expectations were distinctly low, nevertheless 7 people attended.

This was a joint meeting of the BENHS and the Norfolk Moth Group. In the event the weather was bad enough to inhibit exploration of the saltmarsh, grazing marsh and more coastal habitats. We did however get five traps positioned in areas of wet woodland and *Phragmites* along the landward side of the reserve.

Moth activity at the traps was poor. Then at 21.30 some cloud cover moved in, the wind dropped off and over the next hour we caught some moths. Four traps stayed until dawn clocking up a pleasing 67 species, including 15 species of micro-moth.

There was a good representation of wainscots including southern (*Mythimna straminea* Treits.), obscure (*M. obsoleta* Hübn.) and silky (*Chilodes maritimus* Tausch.). Other highlights included double dart (*Graphiphora augur* F.), small cerophan (*Pterapherapteryx sexalata* Retz.), cream-bordered green pea (*Earias clorana* L.) and *Phlyctaenia perlucaialis* (Hübn.).

Without a doubt the moth of the night was a species that enchanted all who witnessed it. The rosy wave (*Scopula emutaria* Hübn.) may not look very impressive in most illustrations, but in life it has an elegant and delicate beauty that rivals any of the Geometridae. The wings are dusted with a pinkish shine and are held in such a way that the pattern takes on a delightful symmetry. The species is associated with coastal marshes and some inland bogs, but the larval foodplant is unknown. The rosy wave is nationally notable and had not been recorded at Titchwell for 36 years.

Dungeness, Kent, 28 September 1996

Leader: **Colin Hart**. Seven members gathered at the Britannia Inn over a drink and a bite to discuss the catches of the year and the prospects for the evening. In the event the weather was poor with moderate north-westerly winds and rain arriving soon after midnight. Catches were poor although most of the resident species expected at this time of year were seen. *Paradiarsia glareosa* (Esp.) and *Aporophila australis* (Boisd.), both of which have interesting forms at Dungeness, were present in small numbers. Migrants were represented only by a few *Peridroma saucia* (Hübn.) which arrived at about 11pm, and *Nomophila noctuella* (D.&S.) which as many members will know has been ubiquitous this year and had probably bred locally. Three *Calophasia lunula* (Hufn.) larvae were found on a clump of *Linaria vulgaris* (Mill.) close to the Britannia Inn and a larva of *Autographa gamma* (L.) was swept from the same plant. David Gibbs visited the bird observatory the following morning and discovered a long-dead *Scopula marginepunctata* (Goeze) in the kitchen.